



The slide features a blue background with a bokeh effect. At the top, a white rounded rectangle contains the logo for 'CLEAN CREEKS, HEALTHY COMMUNITIES', which includes stylized blue waves and black silhouettes of houses and a tree. Below this, a white rounded rectangle displays the event title and date. Further down, the speaker's name and title are listed. At the bottom, a green rounded rectangle contains the City of San Jose logo and a mission statement.

CLEAN CREEKS, HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

Bay Area Trash Summit
November 15, 2013

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SAN JOSE
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Environmental Services

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Good morning. My name is Sharon Newton and I am here to talk about on our Clean Creeks, Healthy Communities.

Clean Creeks, Healthy Communities Project

- 4 year EPA grant project
 - Improve water quality in Coyote Creek
 - Reduce trash pollution: litter, dumping, encampments
- Project Area
 - 3 project neighborhoods
 - 3 mile segment of Coyote Creek

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•Clean Creeks, Healthy Communities is a 4 year project (2011 – 2015) that we implemented to improve water quality in Coyote Creek by targeting the multiple sources of trash pollution including:

- litter,
- illegal dumping,
- and debris from homeless encampments.

•Three neighborhoods were targeted for this project. The neighborhoods were selected because of their proximity to the Coyote Creek and because these neighborhoods are burdened by many of the factors that Michele Young just discussed, that lead to trash generation and lack of engagement. These neighborhoods are highlighted on the map

- 1) Tully/Senter,
- 2) Five Wounds/Brookwood Terrace,
- and 3) Spartan/Keyes

•The area includes a 3 mile segment of Coyote Creek

The CCHC has focused on are four primary activities in this project area:

- Community Engagement and Public education (to encourage and foster interest in taking and interest in Coyote Creek)
- Volunteer cleanups
- DST homeless outreach and engagement
- Illegal dumpsite abatement

•I will tell you more about each of these later in my presentation.



A great thing about the CCHC project is that it has not only given us the funding resources -- but also has allowed ESD to partner with the right organizations.

CCHC's many partners each work on aspects of the program that capitalize on their areas of expertise.

- To address the issues related to **Homelessness** We have Destination Home and the Downtown Streets Team, with support from our the City's Parks, Recreation, and Neighborhood Services Department
 - For Cleanups we have:
 - Santa Clara Valley Water District – they have provided equipment and resources to support cleanups and provided their expertise
 - Parks, Recreation, and Neighborhood Services maintenance crews provide support by collecting bags after the encampment cleanups, and Park rangers also assisted with encampment cleanup supervision
 - For Litter Prevention we tap into the knowledge, expertise, and connections of:
 - Established neighborhood groups
 - Local environmental groups,
 - And the City's ongoing Anti-Litter Program
 - For **Illegal Dumpsite abatement** we engage:
 - City Community Activity Workers (respond to calls about illegal dumping in project area and coordinates with proper department for removal),
 - City Anti Litter Program
 - Education & Engagement:
 - CAWs
 - San Jose State University, CommUniversity (SJSU and Planning Dept),
 - and other NGOs
- Key to all of these activities is the funding provided through the EPA and others.

The cost of the CCHC is **\$942,867**

- \$680,000 of costs covered by a grant from the EPA's San Francisco Bay Water Quality Improvement Fund grant (with \$262,867 in local matching funds.)
- \$112,867, matching funds from the City of San José
- \$130,000 matching funds from the Santa Clara Valley Water District and
- \$20,000 was provided by the eBay Foundation via Destination: Home.

All of these pieces work together simultaneously to achieve Clean Creeks, Healthy Communities

Why Coyote Creek ?



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Why did we center our pilot area around Coyote Creek. Over the years, Coyote Creek has become a somewhat of a dumping ground and has all three sources of trash that we were targeting:

- larger homeless encampments of over 100 people are common (At a recent cleanup 47 tons of trash was removed)
- creeks have become laden with trash rafts and litter
- And on top of that secluded areas of the creek have become Illegal dumping hotspots
- As you can see from the photos certain areas of this creek are tremendously burdened with trash.

Community Engagement Objectives

- ✦ Engage area residents as creek stewards
- ✦ Facilitate and coordinate neighborhood meetings, events and activities
- ✦ Educate community on impacts of litter on creek and environment
- ✦ Provide residents resources to reduce litter in their community
- ✦ Conduct a survey of the targeted community



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The work plan for community engagement includes five key aspects:

- We want the community to become stewards of the creek
- The project funds two Community Activity Workers who rally the community to participate in neighborhood meetings and activities like neighborhood cleanups
- We want to raise awareness and explain why litter is an issue of concern on the environment
- Provide them with the tools and resources needed to reduce litter in their community
- The impact of the program will be measured through visual assessments of physical conditions in the target area and evaluation of the community's engagement by surveying the targeted community.
 - We have engaged the talent of SJSU to conduct the survey. I won't say much about this because Dr. Hilary Nixon from San Jose State University will be presenting data and discussing her methodology this afternoon.

Creek Cleanups as Community Engagement Activities



- + Volunteer creek and neighborhood cleanups
- + Engage all age groups
- + Over 110 cubic yards and over 2,000 volunteer hours reported



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Creek Cleanups are a great way to engage the community.

Last year, the program arranged 20 volunteer cleanup events

- these cleanups included neighborhood street cleanups,
- school cleanups,
- and creek cleanups in coordination with (National River Cleanup & Ca. Coastal Cleanup)

• We strive to involve everyone and make opportunities for all ages. I am told of one neighborhood where an elderly gentleman unable to participate in cleanups along the creek due to physical limitation, found a way to get involve in the effort by making it his responsibility to remove cigarette butts from the gutter because he understood that they would end up in the creek.

• He demonstrates the spirit of what we are trying to achieve through our community engagement efforts: fostering stewardship and educating the public to make the connection between litter in the streets and litter in the creek.

• Volunteers have collected over **110 cubic yards of trash** through neighborhood and creek cleanups and have contributed over **2,000 volunteer hours**

Homeless Outreach & Assistance

Downtown Streets Team

- + Recruit homeless to volunteer on creek cleanup teams
- + Removed 4,482 cubic yards of trash
- + Support neighborhood volunteers
- + Housed 38 people from creek encampments



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Under the project, the City has contracted with the non-profit homeless service agency, Downtown Streets Team, to provide housing and counseling assistance, using a “housing-first” model, to help people who are encamped along the targeted creek to rebuild their lives. T

In addition, these DST recruits work to collect trash along the creek and provide peer support to those that are still homeless.

- They also assist with the neighborhood cleanups discussed earlier.
- To date, these DST workers have removed 4,482 cubic yards of trash
- The great news is that 38 people have received housing through these Downtown Streets efforts.

Illegal Dumping Prevention




- + Volunteers and staff monitor dumping hotspots on a weekly basis
- + Litter and remove graffiti removal
- + Results
 - + 60% fewer incidents dumping
 - + 40% less dumped debris





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The final strategy of CCHC is the prevention of illegal dumping in the area.

- Community Activity Workers and neighborhood volunteers regularly “sweep” the area for illegally dumped litter and trash
- Volunteers pick up litter and remove graffiti
- We recently installed gates and barriers to prevent people from driving into the riparian corridor to dump
- Since 2011, we have observed
 - + 60% fewer incidents dumping
 - + 40% less volume of dumped debris

Lessons Learned

- + Create a process where volunteers have a role in planning
- + Select a smaller targeted area with a smaller homeless population
- + Look for opportunities to build upon existing progress



Environmental Services

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The CCHC pilot project is a work in progress. With two years of the term completed, we have started to appreciate the strengths and limitations of the project. Given the same resources, if we were to start all over again, here are some of the things we would do:

1. Create a process where the volunteers have an active role in the development of the plans for their communities to create a greater sense of ownership.
2. Have a plan to plan for consistently building the volunteer pool. We have discovered that dedicated volunteers can become fatigue.
3. Select a smaller targeted creek area with a smaller homeless population
4. Look for opportunities to build upon existing progress

Coyote Creek is a local treasure and the communities near its banks possess a valuable asset. We know that restoring this creek will take the talents and resources of government, community stakeholders, non-profits and anyone else who finds value in this open space. So far, CCHC has provided a useful teaching model for reviving this watershed.



Questions?

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